



Colourful Kilmacolm

Chairman's Report to the 13th AGM

Cargill Centre, Kilmacolm

Monday 12 May 2025

The longer I remain chair of Colourful Kilmacolm, the more I value the contribution made by yourselves, as members, supporting us financially and encouraging us with your positive comments, and the more I also value the help given by volunteer members with weeding, tidying, and planting. We on the committee are all most grateful for that support. As chair I am supported by totally committed, hard-working committee members whose enthusiasm and fresh ideas keep me going – or should I say keep me on my toes. From the early days of Colourful Kilmacolm there have always been enthusiastic supporters. Sadly we note the passing within the last year of two who were with us from the start: Hazel Gilfillan was on the original steering group and she and Gordon Adams were on the first committee. I have memories of Gordon enthusiastically helping to prepare the Carriages – or Pullman at that time – slope for planting. They, and others, will be much missed.

The committee has had five meetings since last year's AGM. That pattern has developed and seems to be sufficiently frequent to cover the business, and not so frequent that it puts people off. Life is a balance! Sometimes I think there is not going to be much to discuss, although I realise it is important to keep tabs on everything. Nevertheless, we always seem to have a good discussion, and it offers an excellent forum for bouncing ideas off each other. Items we have addressed include the following.

A few of the metal planters on the piazza were showing signs of surface rust at joins after more than ten years. We had some touch-up paint of the correct colour which Robert applied after treating the rust and with luck they will last a bit longer.

Last year I reported that we had made a start to clearing the Carriages pavement of the long grass that had made it all but impenetrable. We finished the job but our satisfaction with the result was rather short-lived as the weeds sprouted again almost immediately. After much negotiation with Inverclyde Council, and not a little pressure applied by Councillor David Wilson, the Council accepted responsibility for the pavement. Resurfacing was too big an ask at the present time, but it was agreed that the pavement would be added to the regular weedkilling schedule and the first treatment last autumn was extremely effective. We shall check that regular applications are given.

As work is still continuing at the flats in the centre of the village, we have again deferred any decision about placing barrier baskets on the railings at the top of Smithy Brae.

Last year's daffodil bulbs were passed to Ian Morrice to be used at the Parish Church garden and the Horticultural Society garden at the Cross. If you know of any organisation that would like to have bulbs passed on for naturalising, let us know. We did offer them to members one year at a bargain price, so that is another option.

We were very pleased with the quality of the plants supplied by Parklea Branching Out and have again ordered from them for this summer. Incidentally, I can highly recommend their recently opened coffee shop, open weekdays from lunchtime. They deserve to be supported. We hope you don't find our repeat plantings of mainly begonias boring, although I think we have a slight change this year at Birkmyre Park.

The laybys are a mixed picture. Snowdrops and crocuses at the Port Glasgow Road layby gave a colourful display, although for some reason crocuses supplied last autumn by the Rotary Club and planted on the roadside verge failed to flower. Maybe by next year they will have established. The Bridge of Weir Road layby is a bit of a disaster. The bus may have gone, but the effects of it, plus the cabin and the fence are still there and do nothing to enhance the area. We will not be rushing to plant more bulbs there.

After experimenting with a borrowed wheeled cart for carrying water around the village, we purchased one for Colourful Kilmacolm and have found it very useful, even if last summer's weather did not necessitate as much watering as is sometimes the case.

At the start of September we had another case of vandalism. Two of the planters at Currie's Corner (aka Moss Road) were emptied of plants, which were scattered along the pavement as far as the Pharmacy. One or two plants even ended up on the window sill of a first floor flat. This was reported to Ward 1 Councillors (who expressed sympathy and passed information on to relevant parties) and to the Police (I received a follow-up call and it was noted). Lorna kindly sourced pansy plants as replacements, and they gave welcome colour for a few months. Vandalism is obviously disappointing, but overall it has not been much of a problem.

As you will all be well aware, work has at last been going on to install a new gas governor at Market Place, as first discussed with us two years ago. I have been in touch with the council, who in turn have liaised with SGN and a site visit will be arranged when we will be trying to ensure that the area is reinstated satisfactorily. The planter which was on the plinth has been temporarily moved and will probably be re-sited in a slightly different position, although still at Market Place, as manhole covers are now where the plinth was.

With regard to planters, we have to find a balance between new projects and what we can reasonably maintain with the forces available. At the moment, apart from the planters at Birkmyre Park, all our work is concentrated around the centre of the village, making planting and maintenance fairly straightforward. We have, however, in consultation with the Council, decided that the Covid Memorial maze at the foot of Birkmyre Park would be enhanced with some floral colour. Accordingly we taken delivery of two half-barrels, the same type as used elsewhere, to be placed beside the explanatory notice at the memorial. We will possibly plant them with a small evergreen shrub as well as the usual bulbs or summer plants.

We have also had a publicity banner made which we will display when out working, in the hope that it will attract the attention of passers-by and allow us to publicise ourselves and, we hope, gain some new members. When we had stalls at the Farmers' Market and the Agricultural Show we found that many people we spoke to were not from Kilmacolm, and therefore unlikely to want to support us, so we thought we might have more luck doing it this way.

As always, I and the committee thank you very much for turning out to this meeting, which, as well as giving us the chance to keep you up-to-date with developments, ensures that we fulfil our obligations as set out in our constitution. Please wait behind at the end for a drink and a chat.